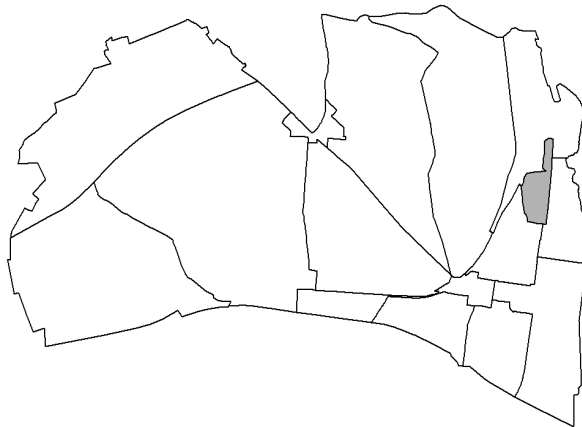


# **NORTHEAST**

## **SMALL AREA PLAN**



## **ADOPTED 1992 MASTER PLAN**

## **ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

*No amendments to date.*

# **NORTHEAST**

## **SMALL AREA PLAN**

The listing of City Officials and Staff from the original adopted version of this Small Area Plan does not reflect current appointments and therefore is not included in this online version.

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## **PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

The purpose of this document is to update the 1974 Master Plan for the Northeast Area. This plan will serve as the basis for future City Council policy initiatives and actions affecting land use, zoning, capital improvements and other programs in the Northeast Area.

## **ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS**

The Northeast Area Plan is organized into two sections: Background and Issues and Plan Recommendations. The first section reviews and analyzes existing conditions and trends in the study area including physical description, demographics, land use, zoning, economic development activities and trends, transportation and urban design. This section also retraces past City policies including adopted plans, rezonings, resolutions and capital improvement programs. Based on this analysis, this section identifies issues which need to be addressed in the plan for the area.

The second section lists the goals, objectives and specific recommendations on land use, zoning, transportation and urban design.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

This plan has been developed in consultation with citizens, property owners, and community and business groups, through a series of meetings which included review of existing conditions and trends in the Northeast Area, identification of issues, review of the 1974 plan of the area and review of plan recommendations.

## BACKGROUND

## **BOUNDARIES**

The Northeast Area is defined by the following boundaries: the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the east; Montgomery Street to the south; Route 1 to the west; and northern property lines of the Potomac Crossing Apartments and RF&P piggyback yards to the north. The Potomac Yards are to the north, Old Town North is to the east, and the Braddock Road Metro Station area is to the west and south. (See Map 1.)

Although the Piggyback yards are within the Northeast area, they are not analyzed in this plan and no recommendations for the piggyback yards are made in this plan. The piggyback yards will be studied with the rest of the Potomac Yards in a separate plan.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

### **Population**

The population of the Northeast Area increased slightly from 1980 to 1985, and is expected to remain fairly stable. The 1985 estimated population of the area was 2,265, up 4.4 percent from the 1980 estimate of 2,170.

During the same 1980 to 1985 period, the number of households in the Northeast Area increased by 12.0 percent, from 955 to 1070. The larger increase in households versus population reflects a decrease in average household size during the same period, from 2.3 persons per household (pph) in 1980 to 2.12 pph in 1985.

### **Employment**

In 1985, an estimated 560 persons worked at locations within the Northeast Area, not including Potomac Yards workers or self-employed persons. This reflects an increase of about 220 jobs since 1976.

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

The Northeast area is a predominately medium density residential area, with commercial and light industrial activities along sections of Powhatan Street and to the north along Slaters Lane and the eastern section of Bernard Street. See Table 1 and Map 2.

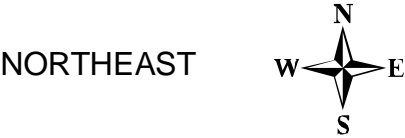
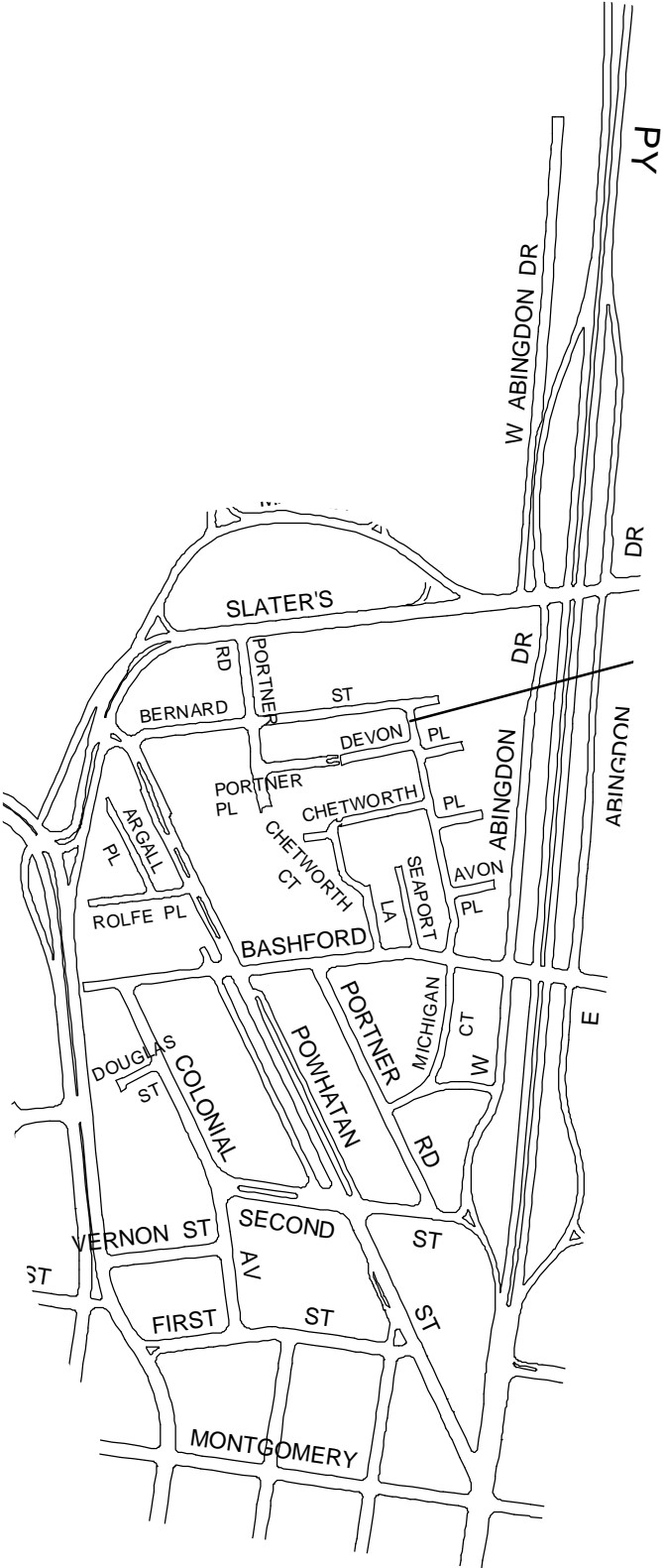
**Table 1  
EXISTING LAND USE  
Northeast Area**

<b><u>Land Use</u></b>	<b><u>Sq. Ft.</u></b>	<b><u>Acres</u></b>	<b><u>% of Total</u></b>
Industrial	232,973	5.3	9.0%
Commercial	138,625	3.2	5.3%
Residential	1,875,055	43.0	72.0%
Institutional	60,536	1.4	2.3%
Open Space/Recreation	71,753	1.6	2.8%
Vacant	224,097	5.1	8.6%
Total	2,603,039	59.6	100.0%





Map 1  
Study Area



<<Map 2 Existing Land Use>>

This map not yet available in online version.

### **Residential Land Use**

About 72 percent (43.0 acres) of the total land area is developed in residential uses. There are 1,163 dwelling units in the Northeast Area, split almost evenly between townhouse type units and garden apartments, all at medium densities.

Most of the dwelling units were built in the 1930s and 1940s; since that time the number of units in the area has stayed fairly constant. About 90 new townhouses were built during the 1970s. In the early 1980s, 169 garden apartments on the block bounded by W. Abingdon Drive, Bashford Lane and Fortner Road, were demolished and replaced with 144 cluster townhouse units.

Of the 1,163 dwelling units within Northeast, 89 (7.7 percent) are public housing units. The public housing is part of the Samuel Madden projects, located on the blocks south of First Street.

### **Industrial Land Use**

Industrial land uses are the second most prevalent type of land use in the study area, with 9.0 percent (5.3 acres) of the Northeast land area in industrial uses. The Industrial uses are located along Slaters Lane, the western end of Bernard Street, and the northern section of Powhatan. The industrial uses are generally light and include activities such as wholesaling, warehousing and distribution.

### **Commercial Land Use**

Commercial uses cover only 5.3 percent (3.2 acres) of the Northeast land area. The focus of commercial activity is at the corner of Powhatan and Washington Street, where there is a small office building, a convenience store, and a vacant gas station. A few commercial uses are also located at the northern end of Powhatan Street, including a small office building and some retail activity. Other commercial uses in the Northeast area include a restaurant, two small grocery stores and two cleaners.

The Northeast Area has only two office buildings greater than 5,000 gross square feet (gsf), although there is additional office space located in office/warehouse type buildings. Tivoli Square, at 1423 Powhatan Street, has 24,000 gsf of space and the American Academy of Physicians Assistants building, at the corner of Washington and Powhatan Streets, has just been completed with 11,162 gsf.

### **Other Land Use**

There are two institutional uses located within the Northeast Study area. Fire Station No. 4 is located at 900 Second Street. Also the City Shop, at the northeast corner of Powhatan Street and Bernard Street, is within the area. The City Shop facility is used primarily for sign painting and storage. It is expected that the Shop will relocate to another part of the City in the near future.

Northeast has two parks or open space areas; Powhatan Park, between Route 1 and Colonial Avenue, and Chetworth Park, on Chetworth Place.

### **Vacant Land**

About 8.6 percent (5.1 acres) of the Northeast area is vacant land. Most of this vacant land is in two key parcels. The Kass parcel, south of Second Street along Washington Street has 88,688 square feet (2.0 acres). The Powhatan Gateway parcel, at the foot of the Monroe Avenue Bridge is the other key vacant parcel. The parcel is owned partly by the State and partly by the City and includes 96,412 square feet (2.2 acres).

## **Summary – Land Use**

The Northeast Area is primarily a medium density residential area.

Light industrial activities are located adjacent to the residential area, to the north.

The key commercial area is along Washington Street, but a few other commercial uses are scattered throughout the area. There is very little office development within the area.

Vacant land is concentrated in two large commercial parcels at the northern and southern ends of the study area.

## **EXISTING ZONING**

As with land use, zoning in the Northeast area is predominantly residential; 77.3 percent (46.2 acres) of the land area is zoned for residential uses. Zoning patterns resemble the patterns of existing land use, with commercial zoning along Washington Street, industrial zoning at the northern end of the study area and along the northern half of Powhatan Street, and residential zoning elsewhere. (See Table 2.)

**Table 2**

### **EXISTING ZONING Northeast Area**

		<u>Sq. Ft.</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Industrial:	I-1	376,684	8.6	14.5%
Commercial	C-2	215,487	4.9	8.3%
Residential	RB	1,161,827	26.7	44.6%
	RC	543,613	12.5	20.9%
	RM	<u>305,428</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>11.7%</u>
Total:		2,603,039	59.7	100.0%

Development of some parcels in the Northeast Area is limited beyond zoning by their inclusion in the Old and Historic District and the Parker Gray District. (See Map 3.) Both Districts seek to preserve residential and non-residential buildings with a significant architectural and cultural history. Any building proposed for construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, moving, removing or demolition within these Districts must be approved by a board of Architectural Review. In addition, heights within both Districts are limited to 50 feet.

## **Residential Zoning**

Over half of the residential zoning is RB-medium density residential, which permits single family and townhouse homes at densities up to 22 units per acre (and multifamily units and densities up to 27 units per acre if built prior to 1973). The two large apartment complexes in the area, Potomack Crossing and Mason Hail Apartments, are zoned RC which allows 54 units per acre. The newer townhouse development south of Bashford Lane west of Abingdon Drive is zoned RM, which allows 30 units per acre.

<<Map 3 Historic Districts>>

This map not yet available in online version.

### **Industrial Zoning**

The I-1 Industrial zone covers 14.5 percent (8.6 acres) of the land area in the Northeast Area. The I-1 zone allows non-noxious industrial activities including warehousing, storage, distribution, light manufacturing; and most commercial uses, including office, retail and service uses. A Planned Unit Development unit provision also permits residential development on very large parcels. Densities and heights permitted under I-1 zoning are a 2.5 floor area ratio (F.A.R.) and heights up to 77 feet by right, or a 5.0 F.A.R. and heights up to 150 feet with a P.U.D..

### **Commercial Zoning**

The C-2 zone is the only type of commercial zone in the Northeast, and it covers 8.3 percent (4.9 acres) of the land area, including the key vacant Kass and Powhatan Gateway parcels. The C-2 zone allows office, service and retail uses at a 3.0 F.A.R. and heights up to 150 feet by right. With the exception of the Powhatan Gateway parcel, all C-2 zoned land is located within the Old and Historic District and is subject to a 50 foot height district.

### **Theoretical Development Potential**

The theoretical maximum of commercial development that could occur by right in the Northeast area on industrially and commercially zoned parcels is about 1.58 million gross square feet. This number reflects development to the maximum densities allowed under zoning on all of the vacant land and redevelopment of the industrial and commercial parcels. It is extremely unlikely that the market would ever support these levels of development in the Northeast area, but this is the level that current zoning allows.

### **Non-Conforming Uses**

There are two non-conforming commercial uses within the Northeast Area: the Dixie Pig restaurant and Lee's Market. These two commercial uses are located on land zoned RB- residential medium. When City Council adopted the Zoning Code in 1951, existing uses on land not zoned for that use were allowed to continue, but were limited to a forty year period of operation as non-conforming uses in a residential zone. By law, these uses will have to cease commercial operation in 1991, unless they are rezoned. (See Map 4.)

The four billboards located on the Kass parcel along the southern end of Powhatan Street are another kind of non-conforming use within the Northeast area. The billboards have been in place, it is believed, since the 1920s. In the early 1970s, the badly deteriorated wooden billboards were replaced with metal structures without a building permit, even though, as a non-conforming use, they should have been removed in the 1950s.

In 1976 the City began to bring suit against the parcel owner and the billboard owner to force removal of the billboards. An agreement was reached between the billboard owners and the City whereby the owner would apply for a special use permit to place the billboards at a more appropriate site in the City. The case was put on hold for four months to give the billboard owner the opportunity to file the special use permit for a new billboard site. Because the City never found an alternative site for the billboards, the billboard owner never filed for a special use permit for another site. Since that time, no action has been taken with regard to the billboards.

In October 1987, the property owner's representative made the City an offer to remove the billboards in return for upkeep of the property. The City Recreation Department determined that the yearly cost of mowing the grass on the parcel would be \$7,500. The City did not pursue the offer because of the high cost.

<<Map 4 Non-Conforming Uses>>

This map not yet available in online version.

## **Summary – Zoning**

- Zoning in the Northeast Area is predominately medium density residential.
- Most of the non-residential parcels are zoned I-1 industrial, which permits the existing light industrial activity but also allows intense commercial redevelopment.
- The Kass parcel and Powhatan Gateway parcel are two large vacant parcels in the area; both have C- 2 zoning, but the 150 foot height limit of the C-2 zone is restricted by a historic district to 50 feet on the Kass parcel.
- The theoretical maximum of development that could occur by right under existing zoning in the area is 1.58 million g.s.f.; this figure includes development of vacant parcels and redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial properties.
- There are two non-conforming uses in the Northeast area: the Dixie Pig Restaurant on Powhatan Street and Lee's Market on Bashford Lane.

## **ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

### **Recent Development**

To date, there has been relatively little development or redevelopment activity occurring in the Northeast Area. The largest project was residential and involved the razing of 169 garden apartments at Virginia Village to make way for a 144 unit townhouse residential development in the early 1980s. This project, Nethergate, has been very successful and reflects the excellent location of the Northeast area, near Old Town and accessible to the George Washington Parkway. Recent commercial development consists of the construction of two small office buildings. Tivoli Square, at 1423 Powhatan Street, is a 24,000 gross square feet (gsf) building completed in 1983. A speculative office building, Tivoli Square was very slow to absorb. The 11,000 gsf American Academy of Physicians Assistants (AAPA) Building, at 950 North Washington Street, was completed in 1988. The AAPA building was built-to-suit and was partially funded with an Industrial Revenue Bond.

### **Potential Development Sites**

There are three key parcels on which new commercial development will occur. It is likely that the two large vacant parcels in the study area will undergo development in the near future. The vacant Kass Property, with 88,688 sq. ft., has been placed on the market for sale. Its location along Washington Street at the gateway to the City makes it an attractive development site. The vacant Powhatan Gateway site, with 96,412, square feet, was acquired by the State in conjunction with the Monroe Avenue Bridge project. Now that the bridge is completed, it is possible for the site to be developed. The Powhatan Gateway site is owned mostly by the State, however the City owns part and would have some control over its development. The third key commercial development site is the City Shop parcel, at the northeast corner of Bernard and Powhatan Streets. The City Shop facility will probably be relocated to another part of the City, freeing that 38,000 sq. ft. site for redevelopment.

Several other smaller sites are likely to be developed or redeveloped. The site adjacent to the 7-11 store at the southwest corner of Powhatan and Washington Street was previously used as a gas station, but is currently unused. This parcel is also likely to redevelop; however, its development is linked to the adjoining 7-11 parcel, which is currently under a long-term lease. There are also two small vacant parcels along Slaters Lane which are likely to develop at some point. Finally, all of the industrially zoned land has redevelopment potential. Current market conditions make unlikely any major redevelopment of the industrial sites in the near future. Development at Potomac Greens to the north could affect the value of these parcels, fostering



redevelopment. However, this is a stable light industrial area; the industrial uses are generally not blighted and the value of the land does not far exceed the value of the improvements. The Northeast area is unlikely in the near future to be the locus for major commercial development.

The only vacant residential land left for development in the Northeast Area is located at the northern end of the study area on Bernard Street. Residential development would also be appropriate on the northern edge of the Kass parcel, along Second Street; however, this parcel is zoned C-2 and residential development is unlikely unless the zoning is changed.

### **Summary – Economic Activity and Trends**

- Northeast is a stable residential community.
- Very little commercial development has occurred in the Northeast area in the past decade.
- Industrial uses in the Northeast are viable and are unlikely to undergo redevelopment in the near future.
- Future development will focus on 3 key sites, two of which are under public control.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

As a primarily residential area, Northeast has almost all local streets. However, it is bounded on both sides by two major north-south arterials, Route 1 to the west and the George Washington Parkway to the east; and by a primary collector, Montgomery Street, to the south. The major traffic movements within the area occur on Slaters Lane, Bashford Lane and Powhatan Street.

### **Major Thoroughfare Plan**

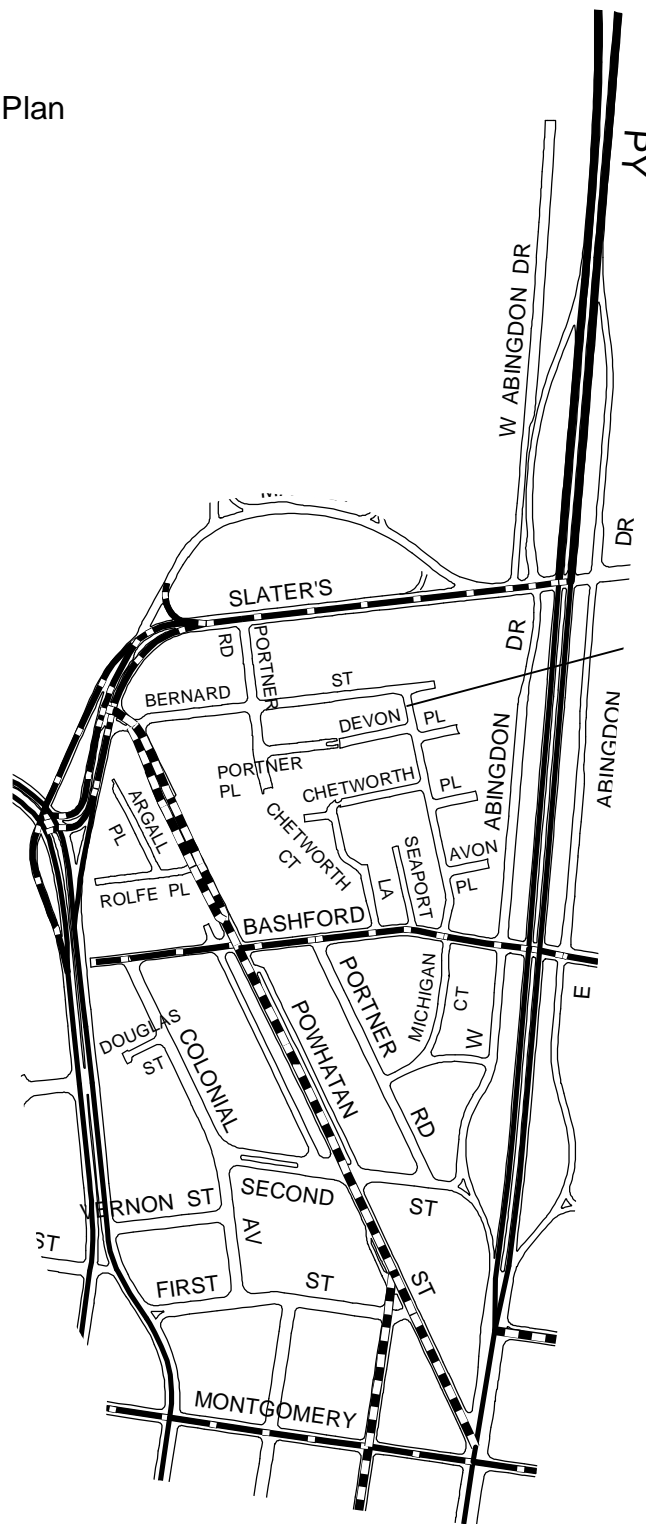
The 1974 Major Thoroughfare Plan for the City designated expressways, arterials, primary collectors and residential collectors. Only two streets within the Northeast area were designated in the Plan. Powhatan Street, with two lanes in each direction, was designated as a primary collector and the small segment of Columbus Street within the study area, with one lane in each direction, was designated as a residential collector. (See Map 5.)

### **Recent Capital Improvements in the Street System**






The most significant project in the Northeast area was the replacement of the Monroe Avenue bridge, at the western boundary of the study area, which was recently completed. The new bridge has the same number of lanes as the bridge it replaced, two lanes in each direction; however the alignment of the bridge with Route 1 and Powhatan Street was altered significantly in the new bridge design, changing the circulation patterns and improving traffic flow. The new alignment facilitates traffic movement from Slaters Lane on to Route 1, while discouraging the use of Powhatan Street. As part of the bridge project, the intersection of Bashford Lane and Route 1 was closed (See Map 6).

Other capital improvements in the area since 1974 include the improvement of the intersections between the George Washington Parkway and Bashford and Slaters Lane and the widening of Slaters Lane.

Map 5  
1974 Major Thoroughfare Plan



**Street Classification**

-  Expressway
-  Arterial
-  Primary Collector
-  Residential Collector
-  City Boundary

NORTHEAST



<<Map 6 New Monroe Avenue Bridge Design>>  
This map not yet available in online version.

### **Existing Traffic Flow**

The heaviest traffic flows within the area occur on Slaters Lane, at the northern end of the study area. Very little of the traffic on Slaters Lane is local traffic; most is traffic between Route 1 and the George Washington Parkway. Other than Slaters Lane, the heaviest traffic flows in the area occur on Bashford Lane and Powhatan Street. The new Monroe Avenue bridge alignment was designed to decrease traffic on Powhatan Street, and along with the closure of the Route 1 and Bashford Lane intersection, will also decrease traffic on Bashford Lane. Slaters Lane will continue to be heavily traveled. Montgomery Street which is one-way westbound, at the study area's southern boundary, also carries substantial traffic.

### **Future Traffic Flow**

As noted above, traffic on Powhatan Street and Bashford Lane has already decreased with the new bridge alignment. Traffic on Slaters Lane is expected to increase along with traffic on the arterials it connects. New development to the north on the RF&P piggyback yards or Potomac Greens would substantially increase the amount of traffic through the northern end of the study area, on Slaters Lane and could also impact the residential streets in the Northeast area.

Redevelopment of the industrially zoned parcels would also increase traffic in the area. Although this is unlikely to occur, theoretically the zoning allows for the development of 1.58 million square feet of office development, which would add an estimated 2,550 a.m. peak hour trips to the streets in the study area, forcing traffic on the residential streets.

### **Public Transit**

The Northeast Area is served by the Braddock Metro Station, which is a five to ten minute walk from most parts of the Northeast area. Bus service is provided by two metro lines and one DASH line within the study area, and two other DASH routes provide service along Montgomery Street at the Northeast Area's southern boundary.

### **Summary – Transportation**

- The Northeast area is surrounded by heavily trafficked streets: Route 1 and Washington Street arterials are to the west and east and are connected by Slaters Lane and Montgomery Street to the north and south.
- The Monroe Avenue bridge was designed to decrease traffic on Powhatan Street.

## **URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER**

### **Height and Density Character**

The Northeast Area is comprised primarily of two to three story row housing. Two garden apartment complexes along Washington Street are also low in scale and relatively low in density. While some of the industrially and commercially used buildings at the northern end of the study area have large footprints (cover a large area), they are all generally low in scale with one to three stories.

Development along the eastern third and southern edge of the study area is limited to fifty feet by the two Historic Districts. Heights over the northern part of the study area are limited to 77 feet by right or 150 feet with a P.U.D. by the industrial zoning. The 77 feet and 150 feet heights allowed by the zoning are clearly out-of-scale with the existing low-scale character of the study area. The industrial zoning allows development with densities up to a 2.5 floor-area-ratio by right; this allowed density is considerably more than that which exists in the area and is inconsistent with the Northeast's existing character.

### **Pedestrian Circulation and Visual Character**

The major arterials on both sides of the Northeast area, Washington Street and Route 1, form barriers for pedestrians. To the east, one of the key pedestrian paths across Washington Street is at First Street, which is signalized and has a pedestrian crosswalk. Northeast residents' access to this crosswalk is inhibited by the lack of sidewalks on the adjacent Kass parcel and along the Parkway/ Washington Street.

To the west, Route 1 is the major barrier for pedestrians traveling between the Northeast Area and points west, particularly the Monroe Avenue bridge and the Braddock Road metro station. A crosswalk and signal provide access across Route 1 at the Monroe Ave./Route 1 /Slaters Lane intersection and the Montgomery St./ Route 1 intersection. A pedestrian crossing is part of the intersection design for the Route 1/Fayette St. intersection currently being completed. The Fayette St./Route 1 pedestrian crossing will provide needed access to the Braddock Rd. metro station and surrounding area.

There are two sites within the Northeast area where an excessive amount of pavement inhibits pedestrian movement and/or detracts considerably from the visual character of the area. These sites are the intersection of Powhatan St. and Bashford Lane, and the First St./Columbus St./Powhatan St. intersection and adjoining 7-11 site. These areas can be improved by extending islands, adding landscaping and street improvements, as appropriate.

### **Summary – Urban Design**

- The Northeast Area has a low density, low scale character in both the residential and industrial areas.
- Existing development rights would allow heights and densities which are clearly out of scale for this residential area.
- Pedestrian access across Route 1 and Washington Street at key intersections needs improvement.

### **POLICY HISTORY**

The 1974 Master Plan for the City designated most of the Northeast area for residential uses. Industrial uses were designated along the northern part of the study area, and a small commercial area was designated at the southeast corner of the study area along Washington Street. In the text of the Plan, however, relocation of industrial uses from Planning District 1 to more appropriate areas in the City was encouraged when one or more of the following conditions was present: 1) close proximity to single-family homes, 2) new uses being planned, 3) obsolescence of buildings, 4) environmental hazard. Another recommendation of the 1974 plan relating to the Northeast area was to protect the appearance of Washington Street as the gateway of Planning District I.

In April, 1979, at the request of City Council, a study of the Northeast Area was undertaken by the Department of Planning and Community Development. Although a draft small area plan for the Northeast Area was developed by staff, the plan was never sent to Council for adoption. Citizen resistance to the Plan resulted in its deferral and it was never completed. The resistance to the plan, as expressed by the Northeast Neighborhood Association, resulted from the residents' desire to see a more detailed and implementation oriented planning document for the neighborhood.

In 1978, the City approved a rezoning from RB to RM of the Virginia Village garden apartment located on the block bounded by Bashford, Abingdon Lane, Second Street and Portner Road. This rezoning allowed development at a density higher than that allowed under the old zoning, but still limited redevelopment to a density lower than that of the apartments being replaced. A Special Use Permit was approved on the Virginia Village site for Nethergate, a cluster townhouse project.

In 1986, the City denied a request to rezone the parcel at the corner of Bernard Street and Portner Road from RB medium density residential to I-1 industrial. This parcel is located at the edge of the residential area, directly adjacent to the industrial area. The City denied the rezoning request, with the Planning Commission deciding that the rezoning was out of character with the predominately residential character of the properties to the east and south.

Other City policies in the Northeast focused on improving the physical environment within the Northeast Area, primarily through the Potomac East Neighborhood Improvement Program. Program funding allocated to the Northeast Neighborhood was used to acquire and develop Powhatan Park, to landscape the park at Powhatan Gateway, and to improve streetscapes along First, Second and Powhatan Streets.

In 1987, the City began construction of the new Monroe Avenue bridge over the rail yards. The initial studies on the alignment of the new bridge were done in the late 1970s. Citizen concern about increased traffic impacts on local streets, depending on the final alignment of the bridge with regard to Route 1, resulted in long delays in the project. Finally, a bridge design with the same number of lanes as the old bridge, one span with four lanes, was agreed upon. Also the alignment of the bridge as it meets Route 1 was designed to discourage traffic from using Powhatan Street. Construction of the new bridge was completed in the Spring of 1988.

Other Capital Improvements within the Northeast area in the past decade include the widening of Bashford and Slaters Lane at the intersection with Washington Street. Bashford Lane was widened only at the intersection with Washington Street in recognition of the residential character of the rest of the Street.

One other notable capital improvement made by the City in recent years was the acquisition of land for Chetworth Park, located on Chetworth Place.

### **Summary – Policy History**

- City policy in the Northeast Area focused on improving and protecting the residential neighborhoods by discouraging through traffic, commercial encroachment and providing open space.

### **ISSUES**

The Northeast area is primarily a residential neighborhood, although it does have a number of long-established low intensity industrial uses as well as a small pocket of commercial land. One of the key issues in the area is protecting these residential uses from the negative impacts of intense adjacent commercial development. The area is an extremely viable residential area, with few sites remaining for additional residential development. However, industrial zoning on the industrial parcels allows for high density commercial redevelopment adjacent to the residential uses. The existing uses are compatible with each other in terms of uses, densities and heights and should be maintained by replacing the existing 1-1 zoning with a true low-intensity industrial zone which does not also allow high commercial densities.

Development within the study area will focus on three key parcels, two of which are under public control. Although the zoning on the publicly controlled Powhatan Gateway and City Shop parcels allows high density and scale development, the City should provide only for lower scale development compatible with the adjacent residential area. The Kass parcel is the other key vacant parcel and it is not under public control. While part of this parcel has been designated for residential land use since the 1974 plan, the entire parcel is zoned C-2 for commercial development. While development heights are effectively restricted on this parcel by the Old and Historic District, commercial development could occur under the existing zoning along Second Street, a primarily residential street. A transition or buffer needs to be provided between the two uses.

Another major issue for the Northeast Area is its vulnerability to through traffic, because of its location surrounded by areas of high and potentially high commercial development and bounded by two major arterials, Route 1 and the George Washington Parkway. Past policies, including the design of the Monroe Avenue bridge and the widening of intersections along Washington Street, have been sensitive to the residential

nature of the Northeast Area's streets. The City should continue to discourage through traffic on the residential streets and should ensure that new development within the Northeast Area does not generate high volumes of traffic which will spill onto the residential streets.

The Northeast Area is bounded by heavily trafficked streets. Another issue is improving pedestrian access, particularly across Route 1 to the Monroe Avenue bridge and the Braddock Road metro station, and across Washington Street to the Giant grocery store and downtown.

Finally, there is the issue of the non-conforming uses within the Northeast Area. Two commercial uses: the Dixie Pig Restaurant and Lee's Market, are non-conforming uses and will have to cease operation in 1991. The community has expressed support for the Market, asserting that it provides a needed service. A policy must be formulated by the City for dealing with these non-conforming uses in the Northeast area, as well as the other non-conforming uses in other parts of the City.

# GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE AREA**

The goal of this plan is to preserve the primarily residential Northeast area, including ensuring protection of the residential neighborhoods from incompatible redevelopment of the adjacent commercial and industrial parcels and protection from non-local traffic. More specifically, this plan pursues the objectives listed below.

- Preserve and protect existing neighborhoods.
- Ensure that commercial development and redevelopment is compatible with the residential areas in both use and scale.
- Encourage commercial development that is at a scale compatible with the adjacent residential uses.
- Buffer residential development from commercial areas and major arterials.
- Discourage non-local traffic through the area, making the local street system more residential in nature.
- Improve the quality of residential life by providing adequate parking, improving pedestrian circulation, providing adequate open space and improving the visual appearance of the area.
- Encourage quality of design befitting the strategic, historic and gateway role of the area, including trees.



## **LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The exiting land use plan for the Northeast area is shown on Map 7. Map 8 shows proposed changes to the land use plan and Map 9 shows the proposed land use.

The 1974 Master Plan designated most of the Northeast area as residential, with industrial uses designated along the northern edge and commercial uses designated at the southeast corner along Washington Street. This plan provides for similar land use designations, while refining the definitions of the industrial and commercial land use designations. The major land use in the Northeast is clearly residential, and this plan retains the residential designation over most of the Northeast area. At the northern end of the study area toward the railroad yards, along Slaters Lane and the northern end of Powhatan Street, land use is designated for Commercial Service Low (CSL), which would maintain the existing uses at low scales and low densities compatible with the adjacent residential. The area along Washington Street is suitable for commercial development and is designated Office Commercial Medium, which provides for medium density and medium scale office and retail development. A residential transition area is designated on the Kass parcel south of Second Street west of Abingdon in order to complete Second Street as a residential street and buffer the existing residential on the northern side of Second Street.

Recommendations:

1. Change the parcels south of Slaters Lane and alone Northern Powhatan Street from Industrial and Residential Medium to Commercial Service Low, with open space toward the south of the Powhatan Gateway parcel.

Existing use In this area, now designated as medium density residential and industrial, is predominately very light industrial along with wholesaling, distribution and limited commercial uses; and is not suited for either residential or heavier industrial uses. Many of the current uses are appropriate for a transitional area such as this one. The scale and density of development is low and the uses do not impact the residential area by creating excessive traffic, noise, light and fumes.

This area is recommended for Commercial Service Low (CSL), to provide a transition between residential areas to the south and east and the railroad and possible future intense development to the north. CSL allows low intensity service and commercial uses, including low-scale office and very light industrial activities compatible with medium density residential areas, at heights generally no greater than four stories. The CSL designation generally allows for the continuation of the current uses in the area.

It is recommended that part of the parcel at the foot of the Monroe Avenue Bridge be set aside for open space. The open space should be toward the southeast corner of the parcel, away from the major traffic flows and sheltered from the traffic by the development on the rest of the parcel. The exact layout can best be determined in the context of development on the rest of the parcel, which is currently unknown. The open space would also provide a buffer between future development on the Powhatan Gateway parcel and the residences to the south.

- 1a. Change the parcels at the southeast corner of Slater's Lane and Portner Road from Industrial and residential medium to Office Commercial Medium (OCM).

Council thought that this location was appropriate for this level of development.

<<Map 7 1974 Land Use Plan>>

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<<Map 8 Proposed Land Use Changes>>  
This map not yet available in online version.

<< Map 9 Proposed Land Use>>

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2. Change the Parking Lot on Portner Road and Bernard Street from Industrial to Residential Medium.

The rest of this block, fronting Bernard Street west of Portner, is already designated Residential Medium. Designation of this area from Industrial to Residential Medium makes the plan consistent with the existing residential zoning, which is desired. In 1987, the City rejected a proposal to rezone this parcel to commercial.

3. Change the parcel at the southwest corner of Slaters Lane and the George Washington Parkway from Residential Medium to General Commercial.

This parcel's small size and location along railroad tracks and a major arterial make it an undesirable site for residential development. The parcel is designated general commercial, which allows for use similar to its current use, a cleaners, or for some other auto-oriented use.

4. Change the Kass property and the Powhatan/Montaomerv/ Columbus block from Commercial and Residential Medium to Office Commercial Medium and Residential Medium.

It is likely that these blocks will be used for retail and/or office uses, consistent with retail and office uses along the rest of Washington Street. These blocks are proposed for a land use designation of Office Commercial Medium (OCM), which provides for medium scale office, retail and service activity. This designation reduces the intensity of development from the very high levels allowed by the old commercial category. Scale of development is already limited to heights of 50 feet over most of the parcels because they are in the Old and Historic District.

The large vacant Kass parcel, zoned C-2, is one of the key development sites in the Northeast Area. In order to ensure maintenance of a transition zone between the residential development to the north and likely commercial development on the Kass block, this plan calls for retaining the residential land use designation on the northern edge of the block below Second Street; however, the area of the Kass parcel designated for residential is decreased slightly from the 1974 Master Plan.

5. Change Chetworth and Powhatan Parks from Residential Medium to Parks and Open Space.

These two sites are existing City parks.

6. Change the fire station from Residential Medium to Institutional.

The existing fire station is shown as institutional.

7. Change the Parkway and Park Service property along the Parkway from RM to Parks and Open Space.

This reflects the nature of the existing use.

## **ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS**

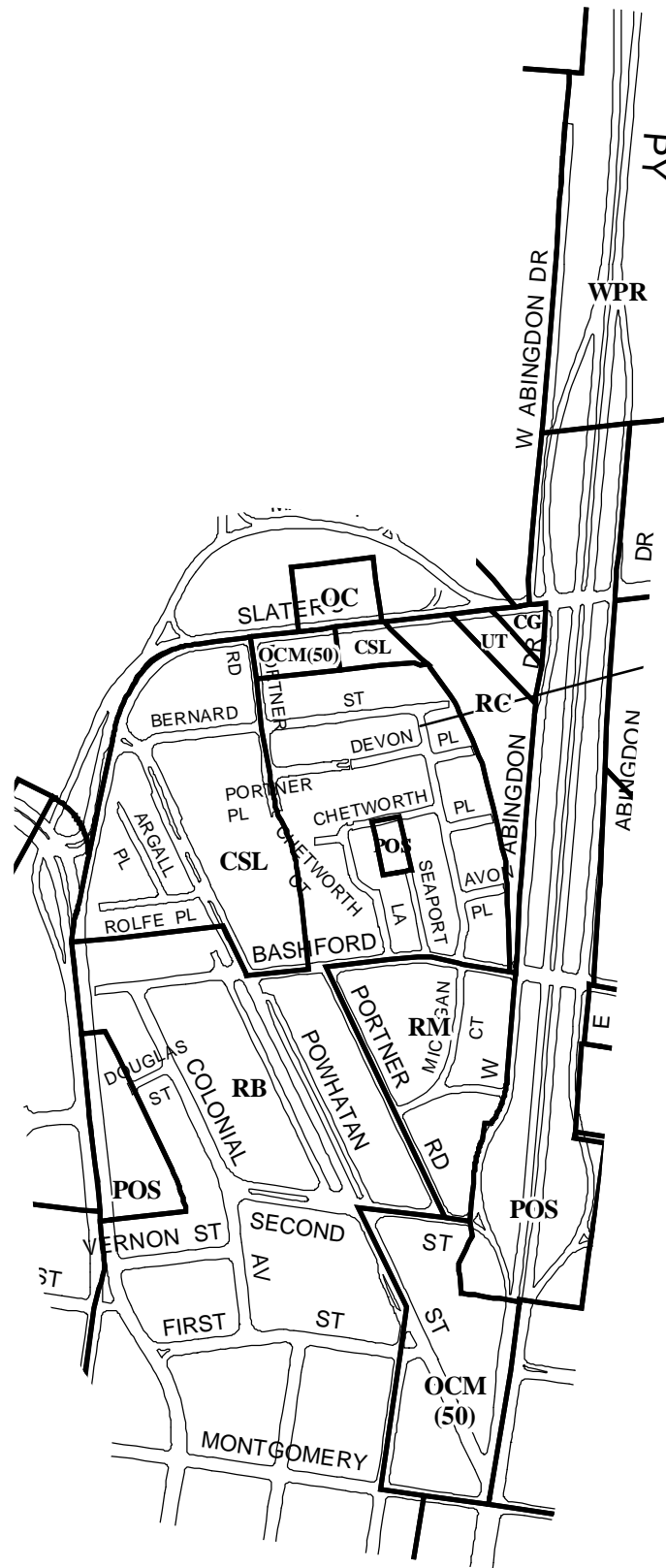
Map 10 shows existing zoning, Map 11 shows the proposed zoning changes and Map 12 shows the proposed Zoning. These zoning recommendations seek to preserve the residential character of the Northeast Area by rezoning C-2 and I-1 areas where intense commercial and industrial development is now allowed by right to zones permitting less intense, more appropriate development.

<<Map 10 Existing Zoning>>

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<<Map 11 Proposed Zoning Changes>>  
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Map 12  
Proposed Zoning



### Zoning Description

- CDD#10 - Coordinated development district #10
- CDX - Commercial downtown zone, Old Town North
- CG - Commercial general zone
- CRMU/H - Commercial residential mixed use (high) zone
- CSL - Commercial service low zone
- OC - Office commercial zone
- OCM(50) - Office commercial medium zone
- POS - Public open space
- RB - Residential townhouse zone
- RC - Residential high density apartment zone
- RM - Residential townhouse zone
- UT - Utility and transportation zone
- WPR - Waterfront park and recreation zone

NORTHEAST





## **Non-Conforming Uses**

The non-conforming commercial use issue cannot be dealt with on a case-by-case basis; an overall policy decision regarding non-conforming uses must be made by City Council. City Council has already referred this matter for study to the Planning Commission on a city-wide basis. Therefore, no specific recommendation is made concerning the Northeast non-conforming uses in this plan.

The billboards on the Kass parcel are a non-conforming use in a commercial zone, which should have been removed by law in the 1950's and are inappropriate in this residential area. This plan recommends that the City pursue their removal.

## **Recommendations (See map 6):**

1. Rezone the northern 120 feet south of Second Street between Washington and Powhatan Street from C-2 to R-B.

This allows the development of townhouses to serve as a buffer between the residential area to the north and the commercial area to the south.

2. Rezone the commercial and industrial parcels along Powhatan, Bernard and Slaters Lane to a new zone compatible with the Commercial Service Low (CSL) land use designation.

The CSL land use category is designed for non-growth areas near medium density residential and calls for a low scale of development, low heights (probably not more than four stories) and low intensity service and commercial; low scale office and clean industrial uses. Zoning which provides for this type of development is needed on these parcels.

- 2a. Rezone the parcels at the southeast corner of Slater's Lane and Portner Road from 1-1 to a zone consistent with the Office Commercial Medium-50 (OCM) land use designation.

Council designated this parcel for OCM land use and zoning which allows up to a 1.5 F.A.R.

3. Rezone the parcel on the southwest corner of Slaters Lane at the George Washington Parkway from C-2 to a new zone compatible with the Commercial General land use designation.

This will allow for the existing use, a cleaners, or some other small scale auto-oriented use.

4. Rezone the parcels at the Southern end of Powhatan Street along Washington Street from C-2 to a zone consistent with the Office Commercial Medium-50 (OCM) land use designation.

The existing C-2 zone allows development at a very high density. A moderate density zone, consistent with OCM is more appropriate in this primarily residential area, and would allow for office and/or retail uses similar to those currently existing along Washington Street.

5. Rezone Chetworth and Powhatan Parks from RB to a zone consistent with the Park and Open Space land use designation.

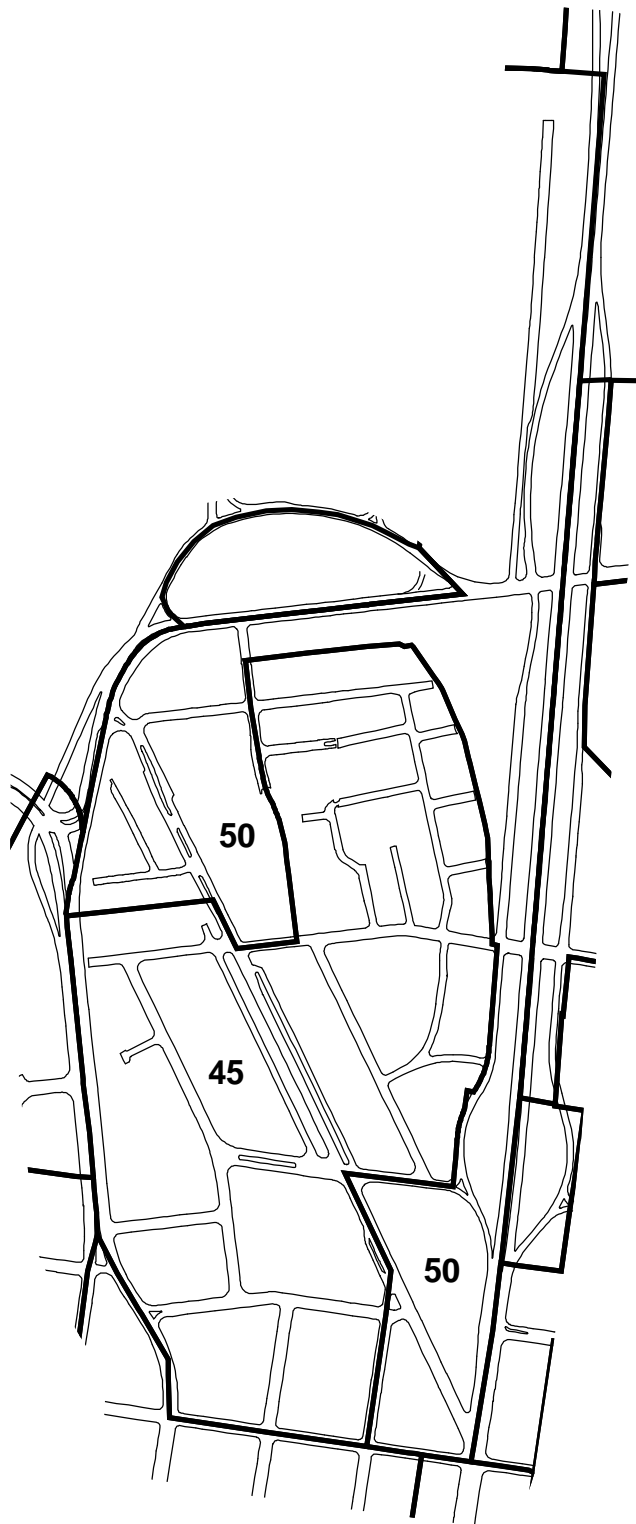
This rezoning is consistent with the existing park use.

6. Direct the City Attorney to pursue removal of the billboards on Powhatan St.

<<Map 13 Existing Height Limits by Right>>  
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<<Map 14 Proposed Height Change>>  
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Map 15  
Proposed Height Limits



NORTHEAST



7. Rezone the Parkway and Park Service property along the Parkway from RA and C-2 to a zone consistent with the Park and Open Space land use designation.

This rezoning is consistent with the nature of the existing use.

## **HEIGHTS**

Map 13 shows existing height limits in the Northeast Area. Map 14 shows proposed height changes, and Map 15 shows proposed heights.

Most of the heights in the Northeast Area are limited by right to 45-50 feet. Greater heights are currently allowed in the non-residential areas at the northwest corner of the study area. I-1 and 1-2 zoning limit heights to 77 feet; the parcel at the foot of the Monroe Avenue bridge allows heights of 150 feet because of its C-2 zoning.

Development to heights of 150 feet is not appropriate in this neighborhood, where townhouse residences are the primary structures. Even 77 feet is slightly out of scale for much of the area. Restricting development to heights of about 50 feet (or four stories) will ensure appropriate scales of development. This limit can be accomplished by height restrictions in the new zoning category, in which case a new height district will not be necessary.

## **Recommendation:**

1. Change the height limits as shown on Map 14 through zoning.

## **TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The transportation recommendations for the Northeast Area are summarized on Map 16.

It is recommended that Powhatan Street be redesignated from a primary collector to a residential collector on the Major Thoroughfare Plan and that parking be allowed between Bashford Lane and Second Street, on one side of the street. Now that the Monroe Avenue bridge is completed, allowing parking along Powhatan will alleviate the residential parking problem and help discourage Powhatan's use by non-neighborhood traffic. Parking should only be allowed during non-rush hours so that the number of traffic lanes is not technically reduced for the purpose of allocating state funds for roads to the City. Powhatan's identity as a residential street should be strengthened by its redesignation as a residential collector on the Major Thoroughfare Plan.

Residents have expressed concern over the safety of the intersection at Powhatan and Columbus Streets. A request by residents to make N. Columbus Street one-way south from Powhatan Street to First Street was deferred by the Traffic and Parking Board in December 1980 pending a plan for the Northeast Area. This proposal would eliminate the northbound movement from Columbus Street to Powhatan Street, detouring northbound traffic to a right turn at First Street and then to Powhatan Street at a safer angle. (See Map 17.)

Finally, it is recommended that the traffic island at the northwest corner of Powhatan Street and Bashford lane be extended south to the point where it is even with Bashford lane, if Transportation and Environmental Services determines the island's extension will not impede the access of City garbage trucks into the alley. (See Map 18.) The excessive amount of asphalt at this intersection makes crossing the street more hazardous than necessary and also detracts from the visual appearance of the area.

<<Map 16 Transportation Recommendations>>  
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<<Map 17 Proposed Intersection Improvement>>  
This map not yet available in online version.

<<Map 18 Proposed Traffic Island Extension>>  
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**Recommendations:**

1. Refer to the Traffic and Parking Board consideration of parking along one side of Powhatan between Bashford and Second Streets during non-rush hours.
2. Redesignate Powhatan Street from a primary collector to a residential collector on the Major Thoroughfare Plan.
3. Refer to the Traffic and Parking Board the proposal to make N. Columbus Street one-way southbound from Powhatan Street to First Street.
4. Refer to Transportation and Environmental Services the proposal to extend the island at the northwest corner of Powhatan Street and Bashford Lane.

**URBAN DESIGN/PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS**

The urban design recommendations in this section address the need for improving pedestrian circulation, visual appearance and quality of life in the Northeast Area. The issues and concerns raised by the neighborhood, as well as staff observation, suggest several improvements to enhance and protect the character of the Northeast Area community.

The neighborhood identified the lack of sidewalks on the predominately vacant parcel bounded by Powhatan, Second and Washington Streets as a major problem for pedestrians using the crosswalk at First Street on Washington Street. Many of these pedestrians are neighborhood residents walking to the Giant Food Store across Washington Street or to the bus-stop on Powhatan Street.

There was also a consensus that the visual appearance of the 7-11 site at the southeast corner of Powhatan and Columbus could be improved. The residents requested staff to develop a sketch plan for the site (Map 19). The plan calls for the City to add sidewalk, curb and gutter with two curb cuts along North Columbus Street. On the property itself, staff has proposed that the amount of asphalt be reduced and that tree planters be added.

**Recommendations:**

1. Direct the City Manager to program funds for the construction of sidewalks from a point at the bus stop on Powhatan Street around to Second Street to proceed on National Park Service right-of-way around to North Washington Street and connect up to the sidewalk of the AAPA building at North Washington Street and Powhatan Street Map 20.
2. Direct the City Manager to program funds for sidewalk, curb and gutter on the 7-11 site at the corner of Powhatan and Columbus Streets, in conjunction with recommendation 3.
3. Direct the City Manager to negotiate with the property owner of the 7-11 site and the Southland Corporation for resident requested improvements that will enhance the visual appearance of the 7-Eleven grounds.

**OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

The State-owned Powhatan Gateway site, at the foot of the Monroe Street Bridge, should not be developed at the scale allowed under its current C-2 zoning (150 feet height limit and 3.0 F.A.R.). Also, staff has determined that this site was the most feasible one in the plan area for additional open space, a need stressed by residents. If the City acquires the parcel from the State it can set aside a portion for open

<< Map 19 Proposed 7-11 Site Improvements>>  
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<<Map 20 Location of Proposed Sidewalks>>  
This map not yet available in online version.

<<Map 21 Other Recommendations>>  
This map not yet available in online version.

space and can place conditions on the development of the rest of the parcel before selling it to a developer. These restrictions will ensure development at a scale and intensity that is compatible with the residential areas to the east (Map 21).

Staff cannot recommend that the entire parcel be maintained as open space. The parcel's location at the foot of the Monroe Avenue bridge and beside a major arterial make it an extremely poor location for a park. A building along the western edge of the parcel would shelter a small park to the east. Although the resulting open space would be somewhat smaller in size, it would also be much more usable by the community than would be the large space created by maintaining the entire parcel as open space.

Residents expressed concern over the future of the State- owned Portner right-of-way (Map 16). This right-of-way was acquired by the State as part of the plan to extend Portner road through to Bashford Lane. The R.O.W. is between townhouse backyards to the east and commercial buildings to the west. If the ROW was sold back to the original owners, commercial uses such as parking could conceivably move closer to the residences on the East. Maintenance of this R.O.W. as open space will ensure at least a small transition area.

The state owned parcel at the corner of Powhatan Street and Bashford lane is not recommended for acquisition. Staff recommends that this parcel be sold by the State.

The residents expressed the need for some type of community facility in the area for meeting use.

**Recommendations:**

1. Direct staff to try to acquire the Powhatan Gateway site at the foot of the Monroe Avenue bridge from the State, maintain part of the parcel as open space, and sell the remainder for commercial development with height and F.A.R. restrictions attached.
2. Direct staff to try to acquire the State-owned Portner Road right-of-way to ensure It remains an open space buffer between the residences to the east and the commercial development to the west.
3. Study the need for a community facility or center in the Northeast Area.